

**Subject: [Patrin] U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION FINDS ANTI-ROMA
DISCRIMINATION IN EUROPE****Date:** Sat, 13 Apr 2002 22:56:57 -0000**From:** "Mr. Ariel Eliyahu" <eli-ari@inter.net.il>**Reply-To:** patrin-roma-culture@igc.topica.com**To:** roma_daily_news@yahoogroups.com**U.S. HELSINKI COMMISSION FINDS ANTI-ROMA DISCRIMINATION IN EUROPE**

Roma throughout Europe still encounter human rights conditions that lack the basic elements of human dignity, according to testimony on April 9 before a hearing of the United States Helsinki Commission. The hearing focused on the human rights struggle of Roma (also known as Gypsies), barriers to education opportunities for Romani children, and activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. "A few years ago, a Hungarian Romani activist said to our commission, 'We don't want the fish, we want the net,'" said Commission Co-Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ). "Education is clearly the net." He added: "Our own experience with de-segregation has not been easy, but it has always been necessary. If American experiences have any relevance for others, perhaps it is because of what can be learned from our failures, as well as our successes. Communities around this country continually strive to ensure that our schools are places that teach tolerance, not bigotry, and are places that bring people together, not places that drive them apart." "The more I learn about the plight of Roma, the more I am struck by certain parallels with the experience of American Indians here in our own country," said Commission Chairman Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Co.), currently the only American Indian in the Senate. "Increasingly, Roma have begun to raise their voices not in search of special treatment, but for an opportunity to freely exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms." "Ethnic persecution and discrimination persist against the Roma in most nations in Europe," said Commissioner Rep. Joseph R. Pitts (R-Pa.). "Stereotypes of the Roma abound throughout Eastern and Western Europe. Unfortunately, there is not overwhelming evidence that the majority ethnic groups in Europe desire to help end these stereotypes and the racism that does exist."

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